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THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

87

Apocalypse now?
Joan Grant's many lives
Black dogs-friend or foe?
World of Charles Fort
The last frontier

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THE Unexplained
MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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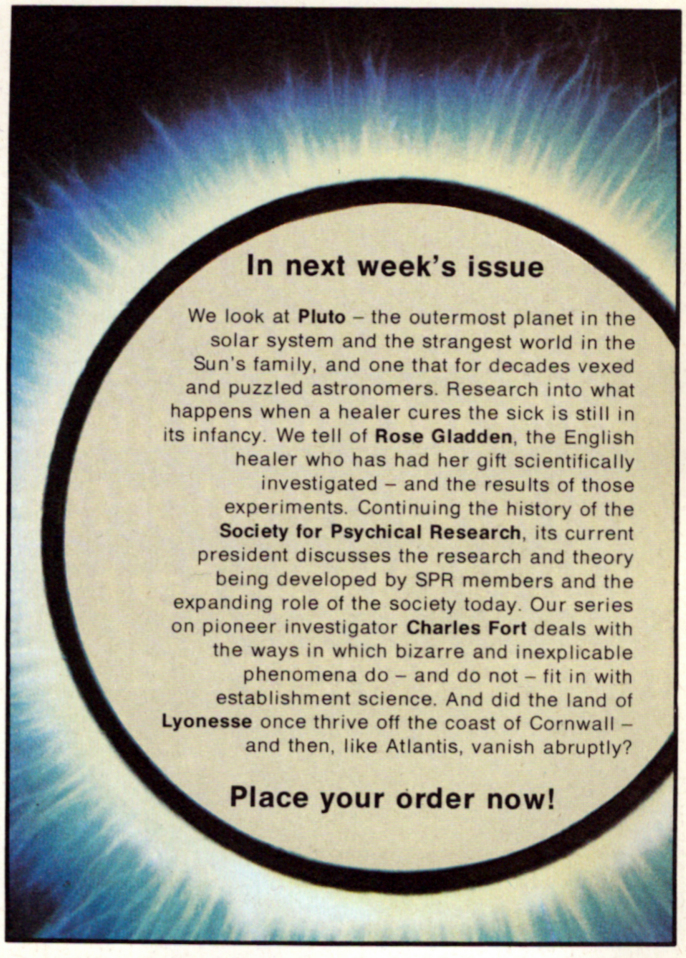
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We look at **Pluto** – the outermost planet in the solar system and the strangest world in the Sun's family, and one that for decades vexed and puzzled astronomers. Research into what happens when a healer cures the sick is still in its infancy. We tell of **Rose Gladden**, the English healer who has had her gift scientifically investigated – and the results of those experiments. Continuing the history of the **Society for Psychical Research**, its current president discusses the research and theory being developed by SPR members and the expanding role of the society today. Our series on pioneer investigator **Charles Fort** deals with the ways in which bizarre and inexplicable phenomena do – and do not – fit in with establishment science. And did the land of **Lyonesse** once thrive off the coast of Cornwall – and then, like Atlantis, vanish abruptly?
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A wild talent

Stones that fall from the sky . . . strange lights in the heavens . . . plagues of butterflies . . . these and other anomalous phenomena obsessed researcher Charles Hoy Fort in the early 20th century. BOB RICKARD assesses Fort's continuing significance

UNKNOWN IN HIS OWN DAY, Charles Hoy Fort was rediscovered in 1947 to become a recognised – and revered – master of the study of strange phenomena and UFOs. His timid and withdrawn personality hid a bold and original mind, which he bent towards postulating solutions to the Earth's mysteries.

According to his biographer Damon Knight, Fort 'was built like a walrus. . . an utterly peaceable and sedentary man. He lived quietly with his wife, almost never went out or had visitors. . . spent the mornings working at home, afternoons in the library. . . .' Yet this unlikely character had a vivid imagination that was caught by every aspect of the anomalous, the bizarre, the occult and the unexplained that fascinates so many today. Because of his pioneering methods and wide range of interests, the word 'Fortean' is used to describe the study of strange phenomena.

A brief selection from Fort's writings might include: the appearance of people from nowhere and the disappearance of people into nowhere; spontaneous human combustion; unidentified flying objects; discoveries of America before Columbus; lights on the Moon; stigmatic wounds; rains of stones, blood, manna or animals from the skies; people with paranormal abilities; wolf children and wild men; teleportations and flights of objects; visions, levitations and other alleged miracles.

Fort was born in 1874 in Albany, New York, USA, to a fairly prosperous family of Dutch immigrants. Throughout his not too

In his quest for stories of anomalous phenomena, Charles Fort (previous page) spent several years in the 1920s among the archives of the British Library (right) at the British Museum in London. During his 'London period' he lived in Marchmont Street (previous page), then a run-down area, close to the British Museum. He unearthed thousands of reports of extraordinary happenings, including cases of spontaneous human combustion, inexplicable flash floods and falls of red rain. Fort offered a characteristic non-explanation for such phenomena saying, 'we are being played with'

happy childhood, Fort suffered much physical punishment at his father's hands, which made him hate authority. His rebellions prepared him for a life questioning authority and dogma. When he was 18 he left home to hitch-hike around the world in order, as he saw it, to put some 'capital into the bank of experience'. One day Fort boasted to a bedridden neighbour of his travels, but the man was not impressed. He too had travelled when he was younger, but it was only when he was confined to his room, he said, that he began to extract lasting values from his experiences. This impressed Fort very much and he later wrote: 'I [realised] that one should not scatter one's self upon all life, but center upon some one kind of life and know it thoroughly.' And that is what he did for the remaining 35 years of his life.

Fort's 'grand tour'

In 1897, at the age of 23, Fort read every scientific book and journal he could find and, within a few years, had amassed 25,000 notes on the infallible public face of authoritarian science. He burned them because 'they were not what I wanted.' He resumed what he called his 'grand tour', reading through the world's major newspapers and scientific journals and taking notes on small squares of paper in a cramped shorthand of his own invention. By 1915 he had several tens of thousands of notes, and he began writing two books. One was called *X* and explored the idea that life on Earth has been controlled by events or beings on Mars. The other was called *Y*. In this Fort presented evidence indicating that a sinister civilisation existed at the South Pole. In writing to his friend Theodore Dreiser, the influential American novelist, he commented: 'You have at least one thing to be thankful for – I might have begun with *A*.'

Then Fort's luck turned – an uncle died leaving him just enough income to relieve him from the worry of earning his daily bread. Dissatisfied with the lack of publishing interest in his unusual books, Fort burned the manuscripts of *X* and *Y* and promptly began a third gleaned from his fabulous collection of notes. Dreiser was taken with the new work, *The book of the damned*, and persuaded his publisher to issue it.

When it appeared in 1919, most critics did not know what to make of it. It obviously presented a radical critique of contemporary science but it was fragmented, choppy and hard to follow. Eminently quotable, by turns compassionate, violent, poetic, ironic and deceptively wise, it was written in a difficult stream-of-consciousness style.

Fort was a cynic about scientific explanations. He observed how scientists argued for and against various theories, facts and kinds of phenomena according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence. He was particularly appalled at the way in which any datum that did not fit one scientist's view, or the collective view, was ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away. Fort called such rejected data 'the damned' because they were 'excommunicated' by science, which acted like a religion.

Fort did not like to be told what to think and expected his readers to think for themselves as well. His favourite technique was to state the bald facts flatly and then criticise them according to their validity and usefulness. Then he would present some 'expert's'

According to Fort almost anything can, and sometimes does, fall from the sky, to heap knee-deep around the bewildered onlooker. Among the many eyewitness accounts are descriptions of the classic 'fire from heaven' (below) and rains of various artefacts, such as the steel ingots that fell on the citizens of Basel, Switzerland, in the late 15th century (right)

case or explanation, and put in opposition to it a few, often fantastic, theories of his own based on precisely the same evidence. Whether the results gripped the readers' belief or sense of humour, he left up to them. For example, throughout his writings he expressed doubts about the Darwinian theory of evolution. Again, in *The book of the damned* he anticipated the von Däniken premise of 'ancient astronauts' by over 40 years. In thinking aloud about the strange vitrified forts of Scotland, he imagined that they had been destroyed in some ancient space war. 'I think we're property,' he wrote, and elaborated his meaning: 'That once upon a time, this Earth was No-Man's-Land, that other worlds explored and colonised here, and fought among themselves for possession, but now it's owned by something, all others warned off.' In *Wild talents* he elaborated:

> I now have a theory that, of themselves, men never did evolve from lower animals: but that, in early and plastic times, a human being from somewhere else appeared upon this Earth, and that many kinds of animals took him for a model, and rudely and grotesquely imitated his appearance, so that today, though gorillas of the Congo, and of Chicago, are only caricatures, some of the rest of us are somewhat passable imitations of human beings.

Travels of a prophet

The year after the publication of *The book of the damned*, Fort fell into a depression. He again burned his notes – which numbered 40,000 – and set sail for London. He could hardly contain his joy at the masses of material in the British Museum. In the next eight years he undertook his 'grand tour' several more times, at each pass widening his horizons to new subjects and new correlations. During this period, his belief in the eventuality of space travel developed, and he was sometimes to be heard giving forth on the subject to an uncomprehending crowd at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park.

At this time Fort wrote *New lands*, the least successful and most cranky of his books. It was largely a satirical attack upon the pomposity of astronomers, who, he said, were 'led by a cloud of rubbish by day and a pillar of bosh by night . . . .' In 1929, Fort and his wife returned to New York and he began to work on *Lo!* He completed his last book, *Wild talents*, which dealt with the occult or psychic abilities of humans, in 1932, during progressive blindness and weakness. A few weeks later, on 3 May 1932, he was admitted to hospital; he died within a few hours. He took notes almost to the end; the last one said simply: 'Difficulty shaving. Gaunt places in face.'

In 1931, the year before Fort's death, Dreiser and another novelist, Tiffany Thayer, organised a meeting to launch the Fortean Society. Fort was not altogether

A monstrous regiment

Long before the term 'psychic warfare' was coined, Charles Hoy Fort came up with the startling idea of harnessing psychic powers to conquer the enemy. He envisioned a fighting unit of 'poltergeist girls' on the battlefield.

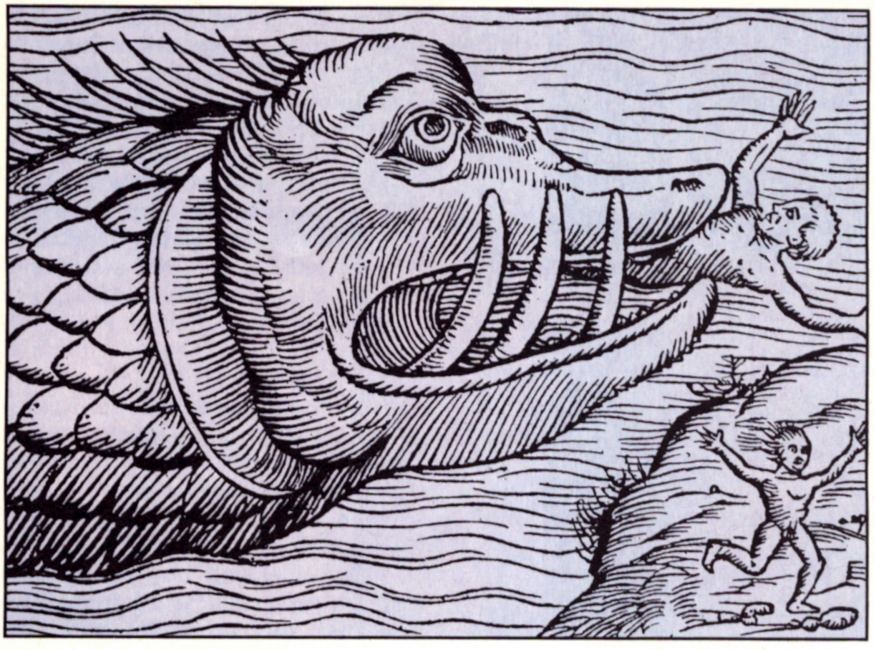
This passage on such poltergeist activity from his last book (*Wild talents*, 1932) illustrates his typical style of throwing out his thoughts.

'. . . A squad of poltergeist girls – and they pick a fleet out of the sea, or out of the sky – if, as far back as the year 1923, something picked French airplanes out of the sky – arguing that some nations that renounced fleets as obsolete would go on building them just the same.

'Girls at the front – and they are discussing their usual not very profound subjects. Command to the poltergeist girls to concentrate – and under their chairs they stick their wads of chewing gum.

'A regiment bursts into flames, and the soldiers are torches. Horses snort smoke from the combustion of their entrails. Re-inforcements are smashed under cliffs that are teleported from the Rocky mountains. The snatch of Niagara falls – it pours upon the battlefield. The little poltergeist girls reach for their wads of chewing gum.'

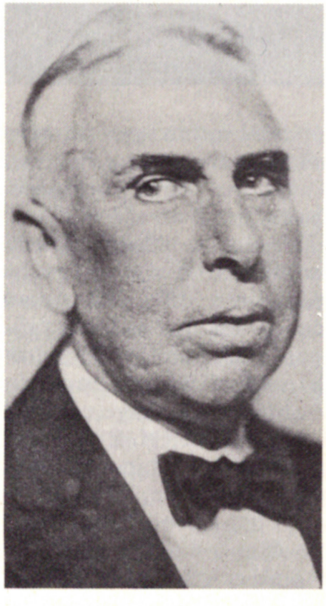
Such a regiment would surely be the ultimate in deterrent weaponry.



surprised, but declined the presidency. He had actually put his objection to such an organisation several years before. In 1926 in a reply to the science fiction writer Edmund Hamilton's discussion of the growing number of people who had read Fort and wished to pursue his ideas, Fort wrote:

> That we shall ever organise does not seem likely to me . . . . The great trouble is that the majority of persons who are attracted are the ones we do not want; Spiritualists, Fundamentalists, persons who are revolting against science, not in the least because they are affronted by the myth-stuff of the sciences, but because scientists either oppose or do not encourage them.

Nevertheless, Thayer founded the Fortean Society and it enjoyed much success in its early years. But because Thayer championed ever more cranky ideas – a flat Earth, for example – the society, and its journal *Doubt*, petered out with his death in 1959.



Top: a sea monster, one of the many 'impossible' creatures listed by Fort as having been reported by sober, reliable witnesses – and dismissed totally by equally 'reliable' scientists

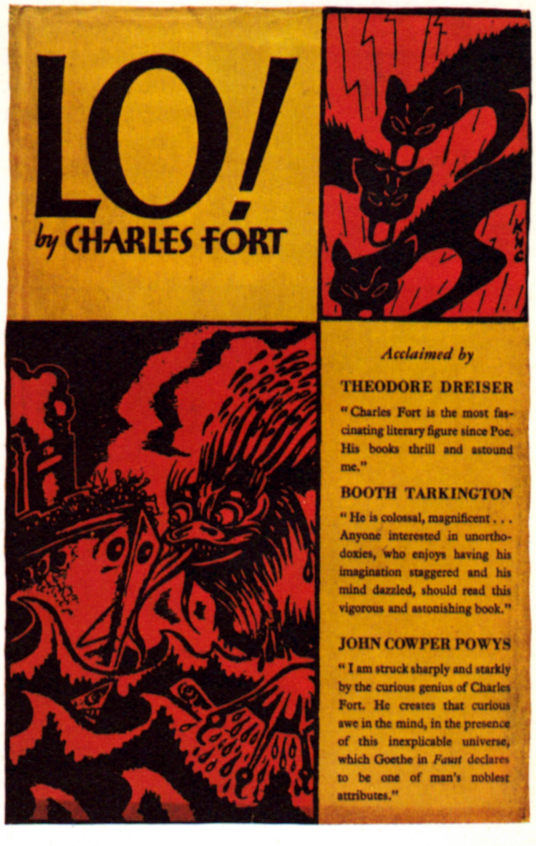
Above: Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945), the American writer who was passionately concerned with projecting Fort as an immensely readable and worthwhile researcher. As he wrote in his review of Fort's *Lo!* (right): 'Charles Fort is the most fascinating literary figure since Poe.' But unlike Poe's works, Fort's were non-fiction – or were they?

Method in his madness?

Today we can appreciate the method in Fort's madness as we see some of his wildest data in a wider context. For example, we acknowledge him as one of the main influences upon the developing study of UFOs, not least because such writers as Eric Frank Russell and Vincent H. Gaddis were originally members of the Fortean Society. Gaddis was already contributing articles on mysterious crafts and lights in the skies before the famous sighting by Kenneth Arnold at Mount Ranier, Washington, USA, in 1947, when the term 'flying saucers' was coined. Thirty years previously Fort had begun to collect notes on lights and dark objects seen dancing, speeding and hovering in the skies over many countries. He wondered then if they were the aerial transports of alien visitors – 'super-constructions' as he called them. He also conjectured that some of them might be little-known forms of natural phenomena.

Fort must also be credited with the discovery that UFO sightings come in 'flaps', as exemplified by the series of sightings of mystery airships across America (1896–1897), and Britain (1904–1905 and 1908–1909). At those times, no known airship could match the mystery crafts' speeds, design or powerful lights. It was this groundwork that prepared the early ufologists for the study of the wave of 'missile-like meteors', later called 'ghost rockets', that were sighted throughout northern and western Europe in 1946. If there were aliens with technologies in advance of ours, Fort mused in *New lands*, they might be able to project images of themselves onto Earth. Or, they might have appeared on Earth in person in earlier times and been taken for apparitions or demons. So that if we consider the history of apparitional phenomena, could not, as Fort asked, many of the 'appearances [be] beings and objects that visited this Earth, not from a spiritual existence, but from outer space'? Although Fort was being deliberately provocative, this passage does anticipate the psychological, psychical and paraphysical dimensions of close encounter experiences of the 'contactees' of today.

Another fundamental contribution by Fort to contemporary theorising is his notion of teleportation as a primary force for distribution of matter, objects and life forms throughout the Universe. From his acquaintance with the literature of Spiritualism, he was aware of the phenomenon of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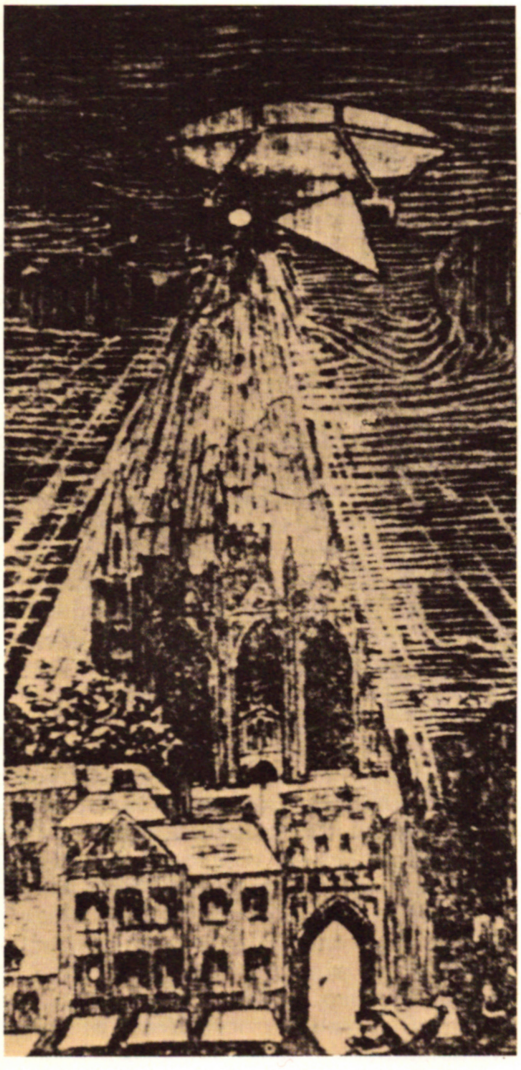


Left: the 'airship' that was seen over Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, on 23 March 1909, and which featured in *Lo!* Two constables, going about their duties at 5.10 a.m., saw and described the object as being 'somewhat oblong and narrow in shape, carrying a powerful light'. It also sounded like a powerful motor ticking over. Fort reported that several accounts of other strange aerial phenomena were received by sensationalist newspapers – but were not used by them. Fort suggested that the reason for this was that 'unaccountable lights and objects in the sky are not supposed to have sex'

'apports' – objects that materialise in the seance room. He felt that apports had an affinity to the appearances and disappearances of people, things and animals, the mysterious transportations and flight of objects usually, but not necessarily, during 'hauntings', and the phenomena of things and animals that fall in the open air in improbable circumstances. Fort coined the word 'teleportation' to describe such phenomena when he was writing *The book of the damned*. He saw teleportation as one of the basic forces of nature. It not only distributed life forms among the planets, but actually shifted materials of which they were built and shaped their environment. In the early days, wrote Fort, this force would have been extremely active. But as life and matter became more equally distributed among the inhabitable worlds, and became better established in their new homes, the need for the force would lessen. Eventually, he said, it would become vestigial, functioning erratically: 'The crash of falling islands – the humps of piling continents – and then the cosmic humour of it all – that the force that once heaped the peaks of the Rocky Mountains now slings pebbles at a couple of farmers near Trenton, New Jersey.'

It was the operation of this force of teleportation within the sphere of living creatures that most fascinated Fort. He could explain falling fishes or frogs in terms of the animals being whisked away from wherever they were abundant to some point in a distant sky, from which they then proceeded to fall. This could account for the sudden appearance of animals far from their usual habitats, or the appearance of fish in a freshly dug pond (see page 153). The teleportive force might even come under human control from time to time: poltergeist phenomena, levitation, bilocation or psychokinesis could occur consciously. Many of these ideas were eagerly seized upon by such American science fiction and fantasy writers as Robert Heinlein, Theodore Sturgeon, James Blish, Charles Harness, August Derleth and Philip Jose Farmer, some of whom were also members of the Fortean Society.

Over a two-year period when he was in his early fifties, Fort wrote a series of four letters to the *New York Times* in which he maintained that aliens were patrolling the skies. They were regarded as crank letters. When he died, the same dignified newspaper called him a 'foe of science' in its obituary on him. Fort would probably have expected such an epithet from people who had never tried to understand him. But his reputation has leaped over the *Times*'s opinion. Today some people regard Charles Hoy Fort as a prophet and visionary – and few who have studied him are prepared to dismiss him entirely.

On page 1746: how Fortean study fits in with establishment science

Below: part of the vitrified fort near Strathpeffer, Ross and Cromarty, in the Highland region of Scotland. Fort was ahead of his time in ascribing the vitrification to intense heat from the fires of battle

Apocalypse now?

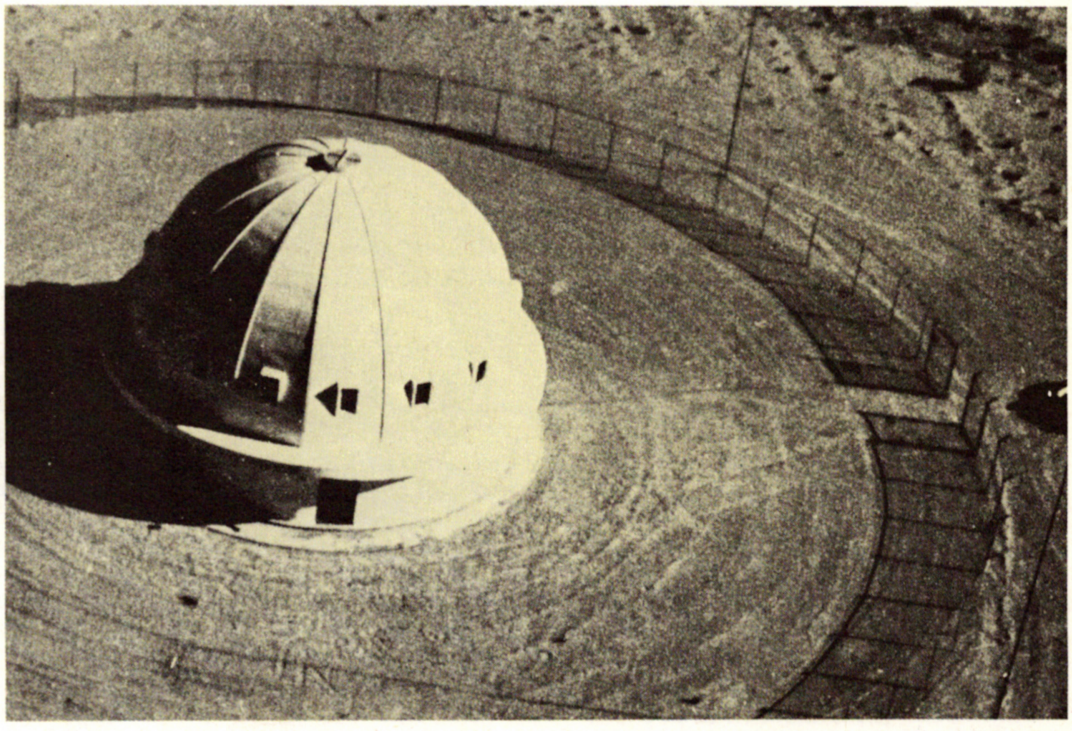
Messianic UFO contactees often give detailed warnings of impending disasters. But, as KEVIN MCCLURE relates, the cults invariably insist that only their own chosen few will be saved – a promise that attracts hopeful devotees

MOST UFO CULTS have appeared in the United States, long the home of countless eccentric religious and near-religious groups. The story of one of these cults is told in full by a trio of sociologists, Leon Festinger, Henry Riecken and Stanley Schachter. They 'planted' observers in a developing group centred on a UFO 'communicator' in 'Lake City', Utah. (The authors used fictitious names throughout, in order to protect their subjects.) The communicator was 'Marian Keech', who believed she had received the initial message from her late father. She sat quietly and regularly thereafter, waiting to produce automatic writing. She was soon contacted by 'higher forces': first by 'the Elder Brother', and then by entities from the planets Clarion and Cerus (neither of which is known to conventional astronomy). She received communications especially from one Sananda of Clarion, who claimed to have been Jesus in an earlier time.

Mrs Keech did not publicise her messages enthusiastically, but others from existing UFO groups and mystical or occult groups soon showed an interest, and in August 1954 a press release was issued. This summarised not only the more philosophical part of the communications, in which the media took little interest, but also predictions regarding a coming physical disaster of vast proportions. The nature of the event, as reported by Mrs Keech, varied at times, but as interest in the group grew its details became more firmly fixed. At the end of September the *Lake City Herald* published this typical report:

> Lake City will be destroyed by a flood from Great Lake just before dawn, December 21st, according to a suburban housewife. Mrs Marian Keech of 847 West School Street says the prophecy is not her own. It is the purport of many messages she has received by automatic writing, she says . . . . The messages, according to Mrs Keech, are sent to her by superior beings from a planet called 'Clarion'. These beings have been visiting the Earth, she says, in what we call 'Flying Saucers'. During their visits, she says, they have observed fault lines in the Earth's crust that foretoken the deluge. Mrs Keech reports she was told the flood will spread to form an inland sea stretching from the Arctic Circle to the Gulf of Mexico.

By now Marian Keech was referring to a group of communicators whom she called the 'Guardians', though Sananda remained the most important. Once the media had



Left: in a television science fiction play a throng of young people, controlled by armed police, gather at an ancient stone circle in the expectation that UFOs are about to take them to a new existence beyond the Earth. Invocations of 'space people' have taken place at pop festivals and UFO enthusiasts' gatherings – where badges such as these (inset) find a ready market. Many older and rather more staid people, however, have also expected to be contacted by UFOs and delivered from imminent cataclysm

started to publicise the group, Mrs Keech and her associates began to be afflicted by the problems that always beset UFO contactees. Increasing numbers of visitors called at her house, often when group members were present. She had explained to the group that if they did the right thing and were gathered together, ready, at the appointed time, they would not be drowned in the forthcoming flood but would be carried away in one or more flying saucers. The extra-terrestrials could come to make contact at any time and in any way: so Mrs Keech and her group had to decide whether or not visitors were extra-terrestrials and also whether they were good or evil extra-terrestrials.

The last days

The cult had now fallen into the classical pattern: it had a communicator, an explanation for the UFO mystery, a message of great importance, and a 'task' for its members – not so much to publicise the disaster as to prepare themselves to survive it. As the chosen date approached, the visitors became more frequent and more outlandish. Members of the group gave up jobs, possessions and relationships, and some took up unusual diets. All who could came together to await the fulfilment of their expectations. One condition of escape required by the Guardians was that all metal should be removed from the participants' persons. This led to some interesting arrangements for trousers and brassières, and a lively discussion about dental fillings.

The last few days before 21 December were traumatic for the group members, as their hopes were first raised and then dashed by increasingly strange messages and predictions, all proving to be inaccurate. The greatest shock came on the day itself, when no flood arrived, nor any spacecraft to save them from it. The group fell prey to disillusion and in due course dispersed.

Above: salvation from ageing and death was promised by George van Tassel, the 'Sage of Giant Rock'. On instructions from extra-terrestrials he built this structure, the 'Integratron', at Giant Rock Airport in California, USA. It was intended for research into 'the unseen truths of life', and to develop techniques of preventing and even reversing the processes of ageing in the human body. The structure, four storeys high, was made mostly of timber, and contained no metal

Another group that purveyed warnings of catastrophe transmitted from space beings called itself the 'Light Affiliates'. They were active in the late 1960s in Burnaby, British Columbia. Their launching statement read:

> We wish to notify all those interested that a phenomenon has occurred here in Vancouver. A young girl, age 22, suddenly began channeling on 23.10.69. Her source is a being identifying himself as Ox-Ho, who is relaying transmissions from a galaxy close to our own . . . . Her material is phenomenal in that she has been informed of the coming disasters, when to expect them, and what to do pertaining to the necessary evacuation of the danger areas and food supplies, etc, that will be needed.

The real name of the 'channel' was Robin McPherson, but she was renamed 'Estelle' by the 'being'. Her mother Aileen became 'Magdalene', her friend Sally became 'Celeste'. A young man involved in the early communications was given the evocative name 'Truman Merit'.

Ox-Ho explained that the day of judgement would begin during 22 November 1969. In these final hours Man would be 'given a last opportunity to repair his decadent house before the terminal series of disasters'. If mankind did not take the opportunity to change, 'the Space Brothers would remove the Chosen and return them to Earth after the planet had once again "crystallised", and been spiritually, as well as physically, restructured.' The 'restructuring' would involve the tilting of the Earth on its

axis and the disappearance beneath the sea of large land areas. The members of the Light Affiliates were exhorted to evangelise wherever possible.

Nothing seems to have happened on the predicted date to fulfil the expectations of the Light Affiliates. Robin McPherson ceased to communicate, but her mother continued the task. In an interview with the writer Brad Steiger in the mid 1970s, she explained where the predictions had gone wrong:

> We misinterpreted them, Brad, because it all happened so suddenly. The first visions I was given of destruction were very upsetting. I can see things now in a much broader perspective . . . . The thing is that it is the first ascension, and it is a *mental* ascension. The Brothers are trying to get as many people as possible into the Kingdom . . . . You know, I've been told by the Brotherhood that Earth is like an encounter therapy centre for the psychotics of the Universe . . . . I have been shown that the Earth is also wobbling very drastically on its axis.

It is sometimes less painful to find ways of showing that your beliefs are fundamentally correct by means of some elaborate reinterpretation than to concede that they are simply mistaken.

Claims that intelligent beings can visit us from the planets of the solar system have been made implausible by space exploration. Alien entities must come from distant star systems, even from other galaxies, of which science presently knows little. Some UFO cults – though by no means all – have adapted to the growth of knowledge by placing the source of their communications in suitably remote places.

The group that made the greatest impact during the 1970s was called HIM – Human Individual Metamorphosis. This group appeared in California in 1975 and appealed to some of those who had dabbled in the drug culture, personal spiritual development and 'New Age' mysticism. The movement was run by a middle-aged man and woman. They adopted names that were modest enough: Bo and Peep. Their teaching offered the advantages of life after death without the inconvenience of dying. Instead the adherents were to ascend physically. One of the cult's publicity posters read:

> UFOs – why they are here. Who they have come for. When they will land. Two individuals say they were sent from the level above human and will return to that level in a spaceship (UFO) within the next three months. This man and woman will discuss how the transition from the human level to the next level is accomplished, and when this may be done . . . . If you have ever entertained the idea that there might be a real PHYSICAL level in space beyond the Earth's confines, you will want to attend this meeting.

More than human

Bo and Peep – formerly known as M.H. Applewhite and Bonnie Nettles – had convinced themselves that they were more than human, and had the strength of will and personality to maintain that impression; converts were clearly quite overwhelmed by them. At first they claimed that they would

Above: Joan Culpepper tells reporters about her life with Human Individual Metamorphosis (HIM), the UFO cult run by the Two (below right). HIM offered its followers the prospect of being transported physically to a realm beyond the Earth's atmosphere. Joan Culpepper left the cult and set up a 'half-way house' to assist other disillusioned former adherents. Her two companions in this picture – still believing members of the cult – had taken the names 'Levi' and 'Moriah'. The Two called themselves Bo and Peep – but at the time the photograph was taken they bore their original names: Marshall Huff Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Trusdale Nettles. At the time they were under arrest by Texas police on charges of car theft and credit card fraud

one day be assassinated and then would be resurrected – after three days. Later these claims were set aside. As in other such groups, members were expected to make sacrifices: to give up their names and possessions, abandon the use of drugs, alcohol, radio and television, and not to indulge in sex – or even read books. The members generally lived in semi-permanent camps. The words of Bo and Peep in an interview recounted by Brad Steiger make their attitude to the family and other personal relationships clear:

> Husband and wife can take the trip at the same time – but not together. It would be impossible to become an individual if you went together on the trip . . . . In order to leave this Earth's atmosphere, you must go alone and overcome whatever needs you have for any other individual or thing of this Earth. Anything for which you depend on another human being or any thing on this Earth must be overcome.

Being a member of HIM was more like being a Moonie than participating in a traditional religion or even a traditional UFO cult. But the structure of the group was like that of other groups already described: there was a communicator, a message, a task.

No one has yet ascended to another physical realm above the atmosphere. Not many people seem to have got their money back, either. It turned out that Bo and Peep had met each other in a psychiatric hospital, where she was a nurse and he was a patient. Yet plenty of people remained willing to believe them and to accept their discipline. Like so many fringe religions, it seems to have met spiritual needs shared by many people at the present time.

Let us look, finally, at one further vision of salvation by UFOs – one that has been experienced in dreams by Sue and John Day, an English couple. They claim to have been taken on board an alien spacecraft near the village of Aveley in Essex (see page 1481). In their dreams they saw a deep red Sun and a dark sphere hanging in a blood-coloured sky. Columns of weary men, women and children made their way through a devastated landscape towards the summit of a high hill.

> There they waited for perhaps days, until their eyes caught the first glinting reflections from a formation of shining UFO-like craft appearing over the murky horizon, heading slowly in their direction. As they drew nearer a number of these craft broke away and descended over the hilltop, then began to lower ramps. The people seemed to know that at last 'they' had come. Come at last to take them away, away from the devastated planet Earth.

The Days identified the area in the dream as Dragon Hill, near Uffington. It seemed to them to be a presentiment of a possible, but avoidable, future – a future holding disaster, but also salvation for a fortunate few through the intervention of UFOs.

On page 1778: spiritual masters or puppet masters? Theories held by UFO researchers

Dragon Hill, near Uffington in Oxfordshire, is one of England's most mysterious ancient sites. It was recognised by two contactees, John and Sue Day, as the scene of dreams they had that seemed to foreshadow some future disaster for the world. UFOs figured in the dreams as saving a disease-ravaged remnant of the human race

Tracking down black dogs

The black dogs that haunt Britain are often to be seen at ancient sites. They also seem to patrol certain stretches of old lanes and trackways. And could there be a connection between this phantom and ley lines? SIMON INNES explores the enigma further

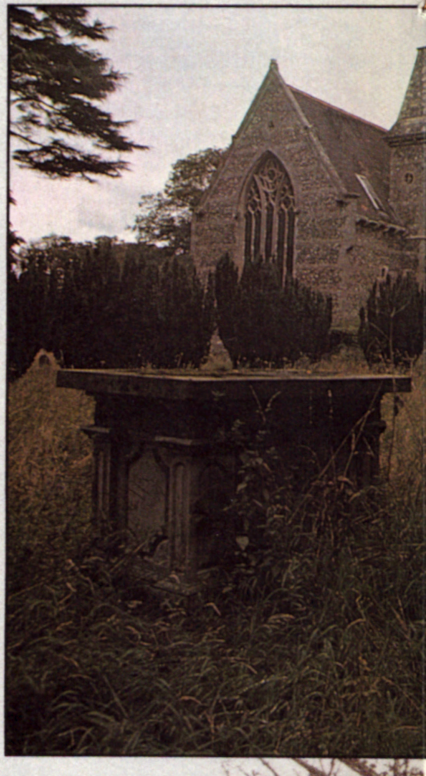
THE PHANTOM BLACK DOG, huge, dark and shaggy, with blazing or fiery eyes, is a strange creature. Although its physical appearance has been well-documented, the question as to how or why it makes its appearances has remained unanswered. A particularly interesting feature that has emerged from many reports of encounters with black dogs is that they seem to have an affinity with ancient sites, such as long barrows, standing stones and churches.

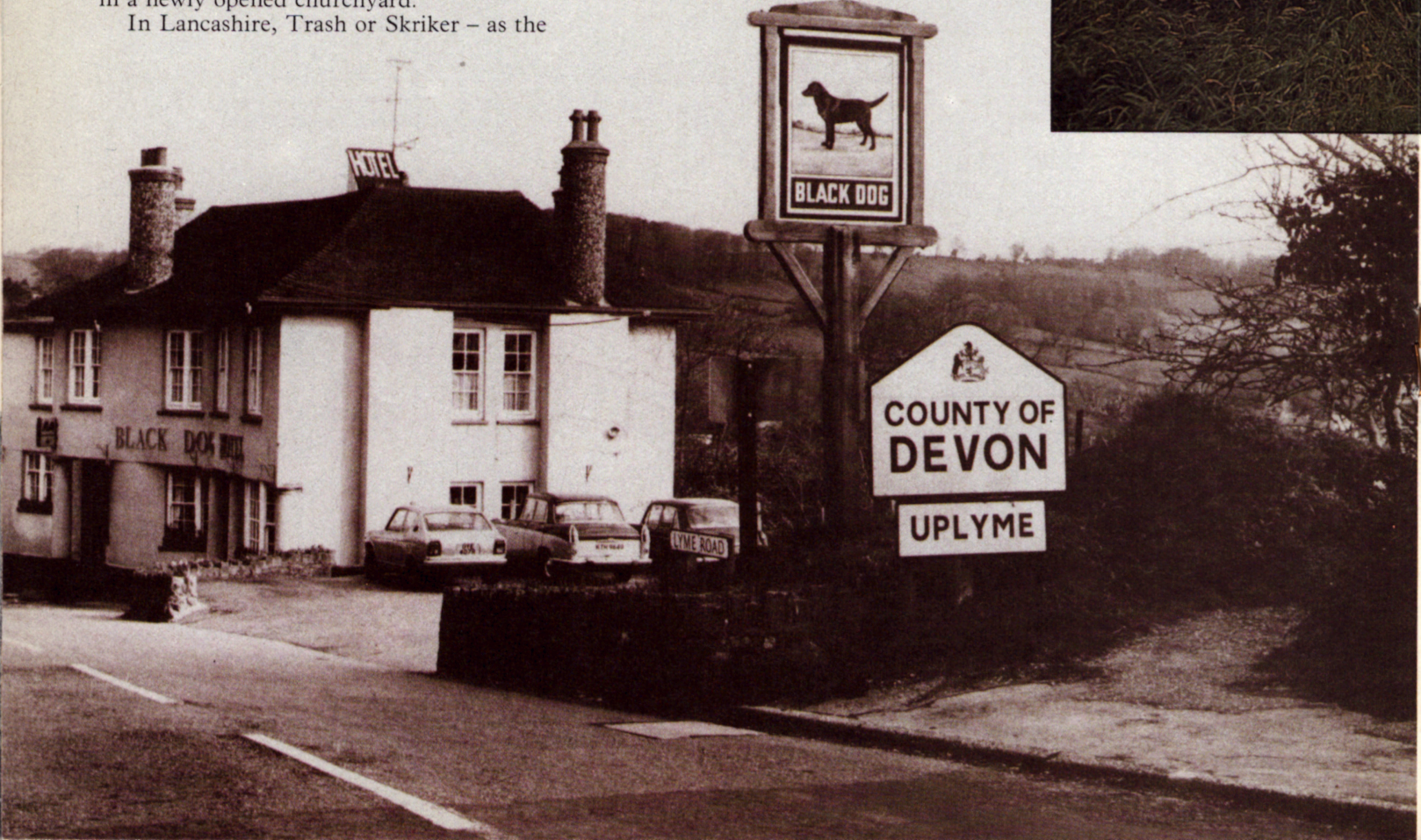
Indeed among country people there was until quite recently a widespread belief that black dogs were 'church grims' – spirits guarding churchyards from the Devil. It is possible that this belief grew out of the once common practice of burying an ordinary black dog on the north side of a new churchyard, where the 'Devil's door' was to be found. This was to save a human soul from the duty of guarding the site, a duty that it was believed fell to the first creature buried in a newly opened churchyard.

In Lancashire, Trash or Skriker – as the phantom dog was known – was said to be seen frequently in churchyards, as was Black Shuck in East Anglia. The churchyards of Algarkirk and Northorpe in Lincolnshire both have their resident phantom dogs, and the 'Moddey Dhoo' – the Isle of Man's black dog – was known to haunt the passageway of a church. The visitations of a black dog to Blythburgh and Bungay in Suffolk in 1577 (see page 1711) were also incidents that involved churches.

There are also other sites that the phantom dogs seem to favour. Among these are old trackways and green lanes – the ancient grassed-over roads that were often estate boundaries. For instance there is an inn on a green lane at Uplyme in Devon called, significantly enough, the Black Dog.

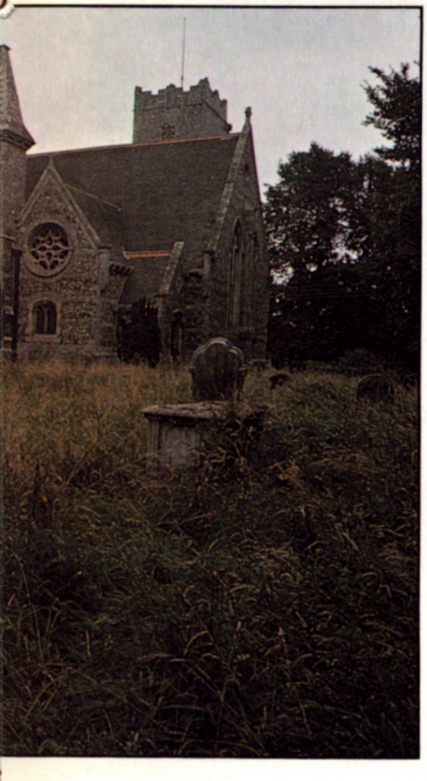
Also in Devon, on an ancient track between Copplestone and Great Torrington, a phantom dog has often been seen trotting along, paying no heed to anything but the route that it follows. In Lincolnshire, a green lane between Manton and Scotter is patrolled by a mysterious dog. So is the old trackway near Willoughton discovered by Ethel Rudkin, who collected first-hand reports of black dogs in Lincolnshire. The Peddars Way, an old Roman road that crosses the Norfolk Breckland, is also patrolled by a phantom dog.





Below: Leiston church in Suffolk, scene of several black dog sightings

Below left: the Black Dog hotel in Devon. The road on which it is located, once a grassed-over green lane, follows the county border, and is reputedly haunted by a black dog



In many of the recorded sightings of these dogs, the location is a prehistoric site, like the one near Stonehenge in Wiltshire. It is called Doghill Barrow and a strange black dog is seen standing guard there. At the ancient site of Sixhills at Stevenage in Hertfordshire, several phantom dogs have been witnessed. In Wales, a dog was seen quite regularly at the site of the Devil's Nags on Cot Moor in Pembrokeshire, and another was known to haunt a stone circle between Amlwch and St Elian's Church, Anglesey. In Scotland at the Caisteal a Choin Dubh (castle of the black dog), near Craignish, phantom dogs were regular visitors, as they were at Dun a Choin Dubh (fort of the black dog) at Knapdale.

Phantom patrol

One fascinating aspect of the phantom dog enigma is the frequency of reports that refer to the facts that the dog was, apparently, unaware of the percipient and that it appeared to be patrolling the route along which it travelled. Indeed black dogs are well-known for their tendency to haunt a particular stretch of road, always appearing and disappearing at the same places. In Buckinghamshire, the black dog seen on the road between Stewkley and Soulbury disappears just at the point where the road reaches the outskirts of Soulbury. The dog struck by a farmer near Aylesbury (see page 1712) always appeared at the same gap in the hedge. This has the added significance that hedge gaps frequently mark the path of an ancient track. In Lincolnshire near South Kelsey, a phantom dog is known to travel along the same particular stretch of road, while the dog of Moortown Hall often appears in the same hedge gap. On the road from Leverton to Wrangle in Lincolnshire, a young man cycling home from work every evening often saw a phantom dog rush out of one lane he passed and turn down another lane just ahead of him.

Phantom black dogs are often recorded as haunting features of the landscape such as boundaries, crossroads, wayside burial places, gallows and holy wells. The dog that is said to haunt a certain stretch of road near Willoughton in Lincolnshire always disappears by the same ash tree.

Water is yet another feature of the landscape that figures prominently in reported black dog sightings. In Suffolk, a black dog is often seen standing at the edge of an old hundred stream where it passes under the road (streams were often the boundary of a hundred, the former sub-division of a shire for local government purposes). In Somerset, near Butleigh Hill, the phantom dog that haunts one particular stretch of road always disappears as it reaches a bridge. In Ireland, a phantom dog was seen approaching a bridge that crosses two loughs at Pontoon, County Mayo. As it reached the bridge the dog suddenly vanished.

While researchers have pointed out this peculiarity, their research has not yielded anything sufficiently positive to reach a conclusion. Ivan Bunn, who is collecting information on the black dogs of East Anglia, has noted that out of 62 reported sightings, 15 dogs were very near a main river, 15 were on or near the coast, 16 were sighted within a mile (1.6 kilometres) of the coast; the remaining 16 fell into four different categories and were 2 to 5 miles (3 to 8 kilometres) away from a major water source. The study would be more convincing were it not for the fact that it is difficult to find a location in Britain that is not near a water source, and that Bunn qualified the analysis by considering only major water sources. However, there do seem to be consistent reports of sightings of phantom dogs near water: perhaps further

Right: the green lane between Manton and Scotter in Lincolnshire, which is patrolled by a mysterious dog. Phantom dogs have the peculiar habit of appearing and disappearing at exactly the same spot along the road they haunt

research will show some kind of a link.

All these factors – the appearance of phantom black dogs at ancient sites, along trackways and close to water – remind us of other features of the British countryside. Janet and Colin Bord, who have collected more than 150 individual descriptions of the materialisation of black dogs, hold the view that the phenomenon is directly connected in some way with leys, whose existence and association with ancient trackways or underground watercourses have now been well-established.

There are certainly good grounds for supposing that there may be a connection between black dogs and leys: they appear in churchyards which, it is known, often mark the position of former sacred sites; they are reported guarding barrows and tumuli; they patrol well-defined stretches of ancient trackway between specific points.

But why black dogs? It is a part of the ley line theory that in ancient times people were conscious of the earth forces and were able to make use of them in some way, and that they erected stone monuments at those points where the energy was strongest or most easily utilised. Since they were aware of the importance and value of this energy, what would be more natural than that they should place some kind of guard over the sources? In that case, why not a dog? We know from mythology that the Greeks believed the entrance of hell was guarded by Cerberus, a three-headed dog.

John Michell has compared ley lines with

UFOs and black dogs

Have black dogs changed their ways to keep up with the times by becoming part of UFOs? Janet and Colin Bord in their book *Alien animals* feel that this possibility must be considered to bring black dog research up to date.

They report many sightings of the black dog – or large animals of a dog-like nature – in connection with UFOs.

In South Africa on 14 December 1963, for example, two men in a car saw 'an exceptionally large dog' on the road.

Above: Blickling Hall in Norfolk. Local legend has it that a black dog was once loosed on the great house – and that it took a 'wise man' to get rid of it

Left: Peddars Way, an old Roman road in Norfolk. It is said to be patrolled regularly by a mysterious dog

Immediately afterwards the road became peculiarly illuminated and a 'strange bright object' dived over their car and went up into the sky as they stood watching.

On 9 September 1973 in Savannah, Georgia, USA, witnesses said that '10 big, black hairy dogs' were seen to emerge from a UFO.

Will further evidence show that the phantom black dog is indeed part of the UFO phenomenon?

Further reading
Janet and Colin Bord, *The secret country*, Elek 1976
Janet and Colin Bord, *Alien animals*, Elek 1980
Paul Devereux and Ian Thomson, *The ley hunter's companion*, Thames and Hudson 1979
John Michell, *View over Atlantis*, Sphere 1975

the lines of force designated in *feng-shui*, the Chinese art of geomancy. An interesting light is thrown on this suggestion by an anecdote told by Augustus Hare in *In my solitary life*. In the mid 19th century, Lord and Lady Lothian decided to take down some partitions at Blickling Hall in Norfolk. According to Hare, an old woman in the village expressed her disapproval to the clergyman and, when asked why she objected, replied:

> . . . because of the dog. Don't you know that when A. was fishing in the lake he caught an enormous fish, and that, when it was landed, a great black dog came out of its mouth? They never could get rid of that dog, who kept going round and round in circles inside the house, till they sent for a wise man from London, who opposed the straight lines of the partitions to the lines of the circles, and so quieted the dog. But if these young people pull down the partitions, they will let the dog loose again, and there's not a wise man in all London could lay that dog now.

The importance of the 'straight lines of the partitions to the lines of the circle' in this tale is remarkably close to the *feng-shui* tenet that the correct inter-relationship of straight and curved lines was essential if the most favourable influences were to prevail at a site. And the 'wise man from London' sounds strikingly similar to a wise Chinese geomancer.

As for Blickling Hall, Hare does not record whether a phantom black dog, running in circles, was subsequently seen there.

Once a guard dog?

How and why do the black dogs appear? There is some evidence that certain ancient sacred monuments can act as some kind of recording device for images of events that took place long ago, and that the setting up of resonance can cause these images to become visible to sensitive people. Accepting this phenomenon, the image of the black dog could be that of a real dog originally set to guard the site. It could also be an archetype representing the sense of guardianship that had originally been imposed upon the site.

In view of the work carried out by the Dragon Project (see page 1578), it is interesting that the appearance of mysterious dogs at certain places is connected with particular times of the year. The West Kennet burial mound in Wiltshire, for example, is visited by a phantom dog on the longest day of the year at sunrise. It is as if the characteristic resonance of the image is set off by particular meteorological conditions. At Blythburgh and Bungay in 1577, for example, there were intense electrical storms. But it may be a particular conjunction of the Sun with the Moon or with one of the planets; or it may be connected with the remarkable pre-dawn ultrasonic phenomena observed by researchers on the Dragon Project.

So far, this is the only theory that can embrace all the aspects of black dog appearances: their occurrence, their association with sites and trackways, and their odd behaviour. There is little doubt that people see these animals, and that they describe them in consistent terms. There is equally little doubt that the descriptions could not apply to a normal dog. There is also strong evidence that the animals are insubstantial.

Threatening in appearance, black dogs for the most part are not dangerous unless attacked – and on many occasions, indeed, they have protected the people who encountered them in possibly dangerous situations. Phantom or archetype, guardian or aggressor, the black dog has been with us for many centuries, and doubtless will be for many more to come.

An interior view of the West Kennet burial mound in Wiltshire. A black dog is said to visit here on the longest day of the year at sunrise

Time: the last frontier

Left: a Brazilian Spiritist in trance. Some psychical researchers have suggested that the subconscious mind has access to information about the future – and that, in certain circumstances, for instance when the mind is in a trance, this information can cross the barrier between the unconscious and conscious minds in the form of a premonition

Below: Hermann Minkowski (1864–1909), the German physicist who first suggested that the Universe can be described in terms of four-dimensional space-time

Psychics appear to be able to move backwards and forwards in time, at will or spontaneously. How does this fit in with the scientists' idea of a Universe in which time has no direction? ARCHIE ROY reviews the theories

DO PRECOGNITIONS and retrocognitions exist and, if so, do they provide important clues to the nature of time? Many well-known philosophers and psychologists have taken seriously the evidence for precognitions and retrocognitions and have accepted that our 'common-sense' ideas of time may be false and misleading, in the same way as the theoretical physicists of the late 19th century came to realise that their ideas about space and time were wrong, especially in the subatomic and astronomical realms. By 1908 Hermann Minkowski was suggesting that the Universe could be described in terms of four-dimensional space-time. In fact, he was introducing what has now come to be called the block Universe, a static universe with no past, present or future except that introduced by the observer (see page 1512). The observer's consciousness travels along his world line through the block Universe like a spotlight moving over a dark landscape or field. Those bits of the field the spotlight has already picked out, the observer terms the past; those that are yet to appear in the spotlight he terms the future.

William James, the American psychologist, introduced the concept of the 'specious present', a small but finite chunk of space-time containing everything that the observer is consciously perceiving at that moment.

The psychical researcher H.F. Saltmarsh modified this theory in an attempt to account for precognition and retrocognition. He supposed that the conscious mind's specious present was smaller that the subconscious's specious present. Thus, Saltmarsh argued, it is perfectly possible that an event that lies in the 'future' of the conscious mind may lie in the specious present of the subconscious. If this event were unpleasant or likely to be dangerous to the person concerned, the subconscious might warn the conscious mind by presenting it with a premonition in the form of a dream. If the conditions are right, the premonition may even appear as a vision while the person is wide awake. Premonitory dreams are, however, commoner – and many premonitions are received in a generally relaxed and receptive state of mind while the subject is either emerging from or approaching sleep, or in a comfortable chair reading a book or watching television.

Saltmarsh did not, however, like the implications of his theory for the question of free will. If the future is simply a collection of events that make up the static block Universe, and if the events that make up a person's life are simply strung out in a line within the block Universe to be approached in a set order, then it seems there can be no free will. Saltmarsh modified his theory in the light of this objection by assuming that the future is in some way plastic and modifiable, and it is only when an event is experienced or becomes a past event that it becomes 'set' so that it cannot thereafter be modified.

It is possible, however, to construct a theory that goes some way towards accounting for the fact that, even if a premonition of a future event has taken place, this does not necessarily mean that the event itself is inevitable.

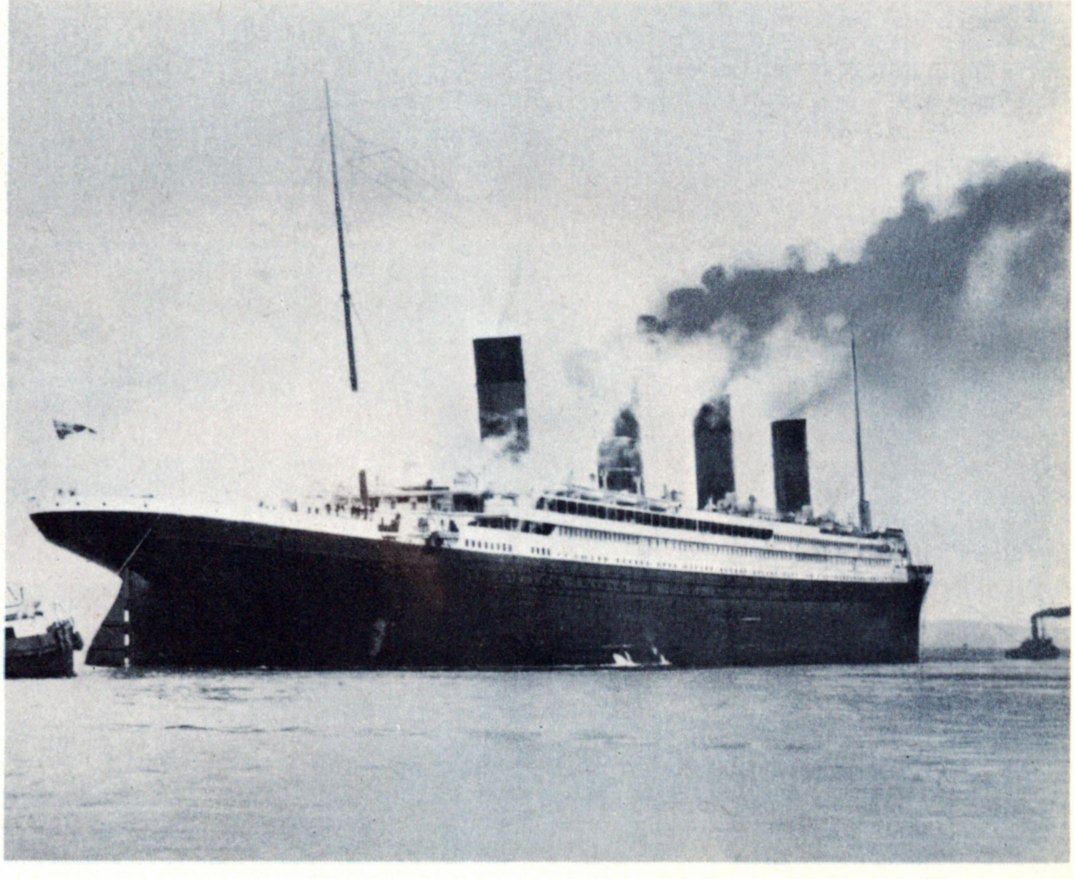
Let us suppose that the spotlight on the block Universe that contains everything consciously perceived by the person at that moment is surrounded by a hazy ring that represents the subconscious. Within this are all the events being perceived by the person's subconscious.

Let us take a concrete example. Let the world line be that of a girl who is scheduled to sail on the *Titanic* in April 1912. She buys her ticket, packs her bags and has them loaded into the hold of the great liner, and is about to embark. But at that instant the event of the liner's sinking is illuminated by the ring of her subconscious, although it still lies outside the spotlight of her conscious. The sinking is therefore still in her future, in common-sense terms. But somehow a symbolic representation of the terrible scenes perceived by her subconscious manages to cross the threshold between subconscious and conscious, and she experiences a premonition of her own death. So she changes her mind about sailing, thus changing her world line across the dark field of the Universe so that she avoids dying on the liner. And, some days in the future, she reads about the liner sinking and no doubt congratulates herself on her premonition for saving her life.

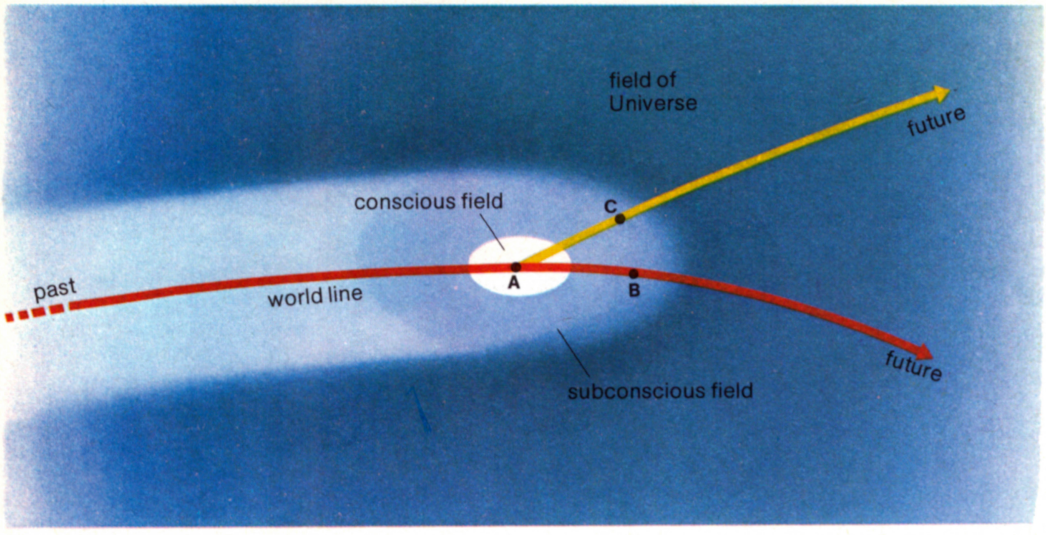
The American psychologist William James (1842–1910), who invented the concept of the 'specious present' – a small chunk of space-time containing everything perceived by the observer at a given instant

The point to note is that the two events – the death of the girl in the *Titanic* disaster, and her change of mind and survival – are equally real in a potential sense, in that they are both events in the dark field of the Universe; the only difference between them is that the girl's conscious spotlight illuminated one, and not the other.

A further consequence of this theory is that, since the dark field of the Universe contains all possible events and presumably therefore all world lines, both branches of the girl's world line must exist, so we must assume that there are many, many branches and junction points; the decision taken at any moment decides which branch of the tree of world lines the conscious and unconscious spotlight will travel along. This is reminiscent of the theoretical physicist Hugh Everett's concept of a multiply branching universe in which every probability is realised but only one branch is observed. The



Right: the *Titanic* leaves port on her maiden voyage. Like many other disasters, the sinking of the *Titanic* was the subject of a large number of premonitions. Some scientists believe that subconscious knowledge of future catastrophes is forced to become conscious through the distress it causes the subconscious mind



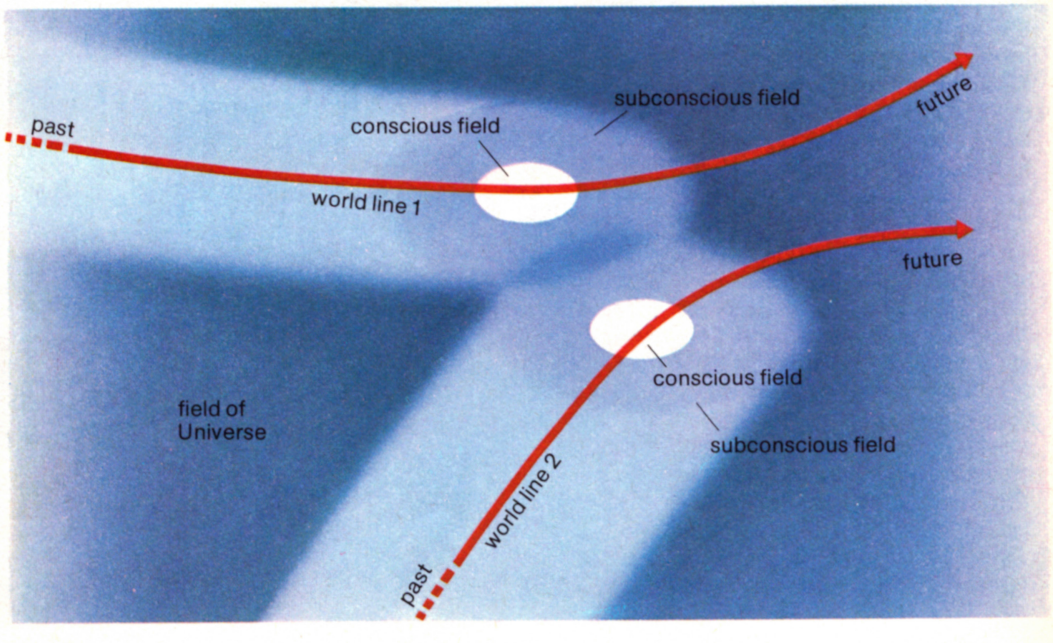
experiences that make up a person's life, on this theory, are rather like those of a man who enters an art gallery at night, his only illumination being a spotlight that he trains on the pictures of the corridor along which he is travelling. He sees scenes of his early childhood and boyhood, and then he comes in the darkness to a 'T' junction. He can go either left or right. He chooses to go left and continues to shine his torch on the pictures on the wall of the left-hand corridor. He sees himself in these pictures as a youth carrying out various actions, going to various places, making various friends, until he becomes a man. He never sees the pictures of what his life would have been had he made a decision that took him right instead of left. He does not see, for example, that he would have died in a car accident at the age of 23. Instead he sees himself finished with university studies, taking a good job, marrying and having children.

There are other interesting implications about this theory of time and the Universe. A human being may be looked upon as the sum of a conscious field, subconscious field and a body. The body is embedded in the block Universe. What we call our body is only an instantaneous slice of a larger and longer entity, the 'body envelope' – the world line the spotlight of consciousness travels along. It seems reasonable to regard a person, alive and in a state of consciousness, as equivalent to conscious field plus subconscious field plus body envelope. If so, is an unconscious or dreaming person equivalent to subconscious field plus body envelope?

Spiritual paths

It may be that a psychic's subconscious field has the freedom to wander over the dark field of the Universe, probing until it intersects the world path of another person. In this case perhaps subconscious field plus body envelope equals unconscious or dreaming person – or perhaps at least in some cases the alleged spirit who communicates through a psychic. And there is also the intriguing possibility that if two subconscious fields, but not the corresponding conscious fields, of the subjects overlap (below)

Above: an observer's consciousness travelling through space-time can be represented by a spotlight moving across a dark field. Around the bright spot is a hazy ring of light that represents the observer's subconscious, A. On this theory, it is possible for a catastrophe B to enter the observer's subconscious field and appear as a premonition that causes the observer to alter his world line to pass through an event C to avoid it. It is also possible to explain the telepathic activity of psychics such as Eileen Garrett (below left): perhaps conditions for telepathy exist when the subconscious fields, but not the conscious fields, of the subjects overlap (below)



intersect then the right conditions for telepathic communication are created.

It has been suggested by a number of psychologists and psychical researchers that perhaps the ring of unconscious perception covers the whole lifespan of a human being. For example, Aniela Jaffé has suggested that, at his deepest level, a human being has knowledge of his whole life, and Professor Tenhaeff has remarked that the psychic may derive his paranormal knowledge of his sitter through telepathy from the sitter's psyche. The philosopher Henri Bergson speculated that one of the tasks of the brain may be to restrict this view of time to a particular moment – as in J.W. Dunne's theory of time (see page 1666), in which the consciousness of the human being is confined to the present moment, but a higher self in sleep is allowed views of past and future events in his life. The American parapsychologist Lawrence LeShan has pointed to the opinions of many mystics and psychics that, in their altered states of consciousness, time and space are irrelevant, there is no yesterday, today or tomorrow, and no passing of time. As the medium Eileen Garrett said, 'In the ultimate nature of the Universe there are no divisions in time and space' – a view that is not fundamentally in disagreement with the teachings of modern quantum mechanics.

It really looks, in fact, as if our consciousness *creates* time so that it is an illusion – a view that is in accordance with Eastern mystical teaching. Future study of precognitions and retrocognitions will possibly be able to define more clearly the problems bound up with the study of the nature of time – for example, the problem of free will and precognition, the idea that cause always precedes effect, the possibility that, given a precognition, the future can be changed by action taken on the part of the percipient, and so on. Philosophers C.D. Broad, C.W.K. Mundle, H.H. Price and many others have already turned their minds to these problems. The fact that such people are prepared to utilise the evidence for precognition and retrocognition in tackling the question of the nature of time shows that the subject is recognised as one of the most important research fields of science.

Further reading

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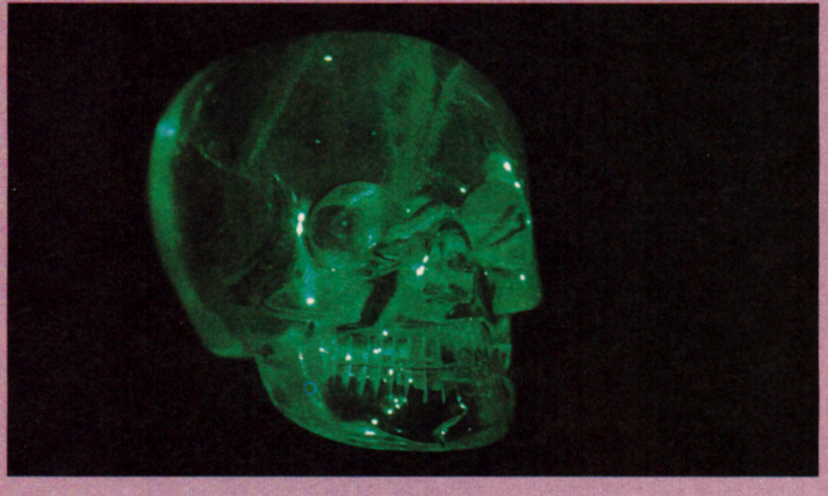
H.F. Saltmarsh, *Foreknowledge*, G. Bell & Sons 1938
Jacques Vallée, *Messengers of deception*, And/Or Press (Berkeley) 1979



Picking and choosing

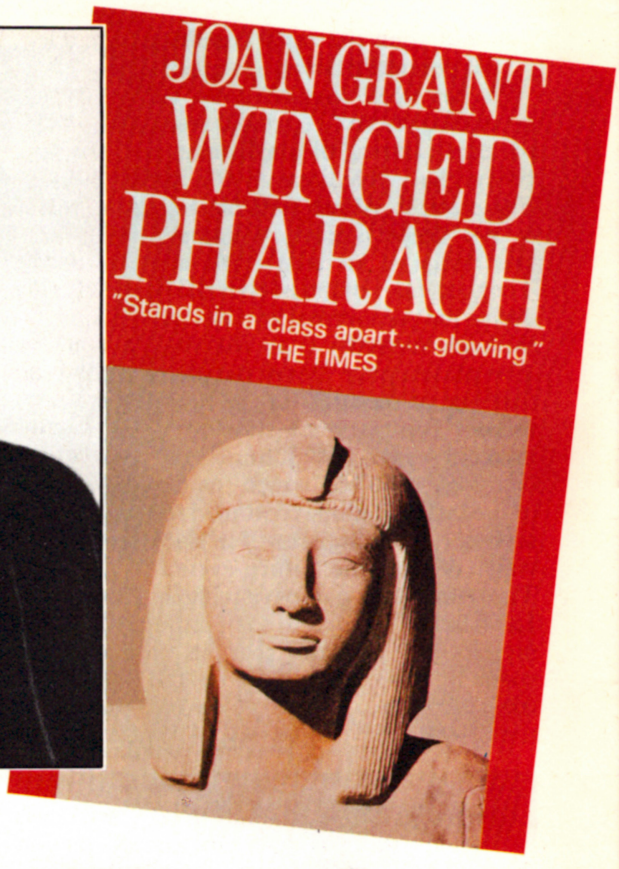
How is it that psychics appear to have private access to information about the past and the future? One suggestion is that they are simply using a secret information retrieval system.

Librarians are well aware of the fact that the disorder of a system is often only apparent. The traditional way of storing books by subject and author's name alphabetically is not the only way. Books may be put anywhere, the shelves being filled in an apparently random way as long as an unambiguous information storage and retrieval system is used.

For example, a book on the Milky Way will be physically located on the library shelves devoted to astronomy and lie between Barr and Bartlett because the author's name is Barrett. In the library's storage and retrieval systems, however, it may be located with three other books by Krupp, Nash and Lawrence because all three books are about the Milky Way. If the library's retrieval system is triggered with the request for books on the subject 'Milky Way', all four books will appear – even though Lawrence's book is devoted to the well-known confection called 'Milky Way'! If one did not know that an information retrieval system was operating, one might be tempted to think that the appearance of Lawrence's book with the astronomical ones was a meaningful gastronomic synchronicity – or to dismiss it as a coincidence.

In a similar way, a hologram viewed with the naked eye makes no sense (see page 1464) – but when illuminated by a laser beam, it produces an astonishingly lifelike three-dimensional image (left).

Assuming that the seeming disorder of life *does* make sense when the correct retrieval system is applied, it is possible to see time as merely an illusion produced by our pedestrian consciousnesses as they traverse the block Universe. The tricks of time – precognitions, timeslips, the ability of psychics to scan at will the long-gone past or the as yet unrealised future – are freak effects of an information storage and retrieval system. If this hypothesis is true, certain questions become relevant: What are the rules for retrieving information from the system? Can anyone learn them? And even, is it meaningful to ask who or what is responsible for the system? And perhaps if it has a physical existence, it can be located. But where?



The strange histories of Joan Grant

Have we all had previous existences in many different centuries and civilisations? Joan Grant believes she has – and ROY STEMMAN recounts the fascinating story of how she has learned to trace those many other lives

JOAN GRANT HIT the public eye in 1937 with her first highly praised book, *Winged pharaoh*. It was classified as an historical novel and, like others that followed, was judged by the experts to be a very accurate account of the time it portrayed. But Joan Grant did not have to research a single detail – she recorded everything from her 'far memory' of the life she had lived as a priest-pharaoh in a previous incarnation.

Joan Grant had intimations of her other lives even as a tiny child; she told stories about who she had been 'before she was Joan' – but nobody believed her. Soon she learned that it was better to keep her stories to herself, and she told nobody else until she was a teenager. Meanwhile, she struggled to unravel her strange dreams and to understand who she was. It took a great effort to train herself to wake several times a night so she could write down the events that had just occurred in her sleep.

Joan Grant was born in 1907 of a wealthy family and lived a sheltered life of comfort and plenty. Even during the First World War she suffered little physical privation. But during that time she began to have vivid war dreams in which all five senses were engaged. In fact, the smells of battlefield and hospital made her violently sick upon waking, and for weeks she tried to keep herself from sleeping by self-torture such as sitting on an icy floor or pulling hairs out. At one point during this time, when at a convent in London where she loved the nuns, she was constantly terrified for no reason. Nearly 20 years later she found out that the reason lay in a life she had lived in the 16th century.

Joan Grant, flanked by her first and best-known book and a photograph of herself as a girl. She had glimpses of other lives even as a tiny child – and *Winged pharaoh* told the story of one of them as a priest-ruler in ancient Egypt

One morning at home she came down late for breakfast after a terrible nightmare. There was a soldier with her father, and Joan said to him:

> Somehow I know you will not laugh at me. Last night I was with a man called McAndrew when he was killed. I can describe the regimental badge although I cannot remember the name of the regiment, except that it was not an English one. And I can tell you the slang name of his trench.

The visitor did not laugh because he was able to identify the regiment as Canadian. Later, he wrote to Joan's father, Jack Marshall:

> For heaven's sake don't laugh at the

child. I cannot attempt an explanation, but I have checked what she said. A battalion of that regiment went over the top on a night attack a few hours before she told me about it at breakfast. A private called McAndrew was among the killed. She was even correct about the local name of the front-line trench.

Joan was only nine at the time, and it was years before her father told her of this unexpected confirmation.

Marshall was a scientist who won a CBE for his work in mosquito research, on which he wrote the standard text. Many eminent men were visitors to his home. One, C.G. Lamb, was professor of engineering at Cambridge University and Joan's special favourite. They had long talks and she felt at ease with him, partly because of his great interest in psychical research.

Lamb had been a friend of Joan's grandmother, Jennie Marshall. One day while they were chatting, he told Joan that Jennie could have been a world-famous concert pianist if her husband had not stood in her way. 'Jennie gives me music lessons,' said Joan in reply, aware that any other adult would have scoffed at the claim, since Jennie was dead. 'Father knows I would never be a first-class pianist so there is no point in my having lessons, but Jennie knows I need music and she teaches me. Sometimes she plays the piano with me – music that is quite different from the ordinary tunes I have learned.'

Feeling that her grandmother was present, young Joan went to the piano and music began to flow. When she stopped, Lamb mopped his brow and remarked: 'Extraordinary. Quite extraordinary but completely evidential. What you have just played was often played to me by your grandmother. . . . I have not heard it since she died.'

When Joan suggested that she may have heard her grandmother play it, or have heard it at a concert, Lamb assured her that she had not.

> Only one copy of that music ever existed. It was given in manuscript to the Tsar of Russia, who sent it to your grandmother. . . . I happen to know that the manuscript of that music, together with several other manuscripts of similar value, was burned two years before you were born.

Jennie Marshall had learned that she had terminal cancer, and decided that no one else would play her music if she could not do so.

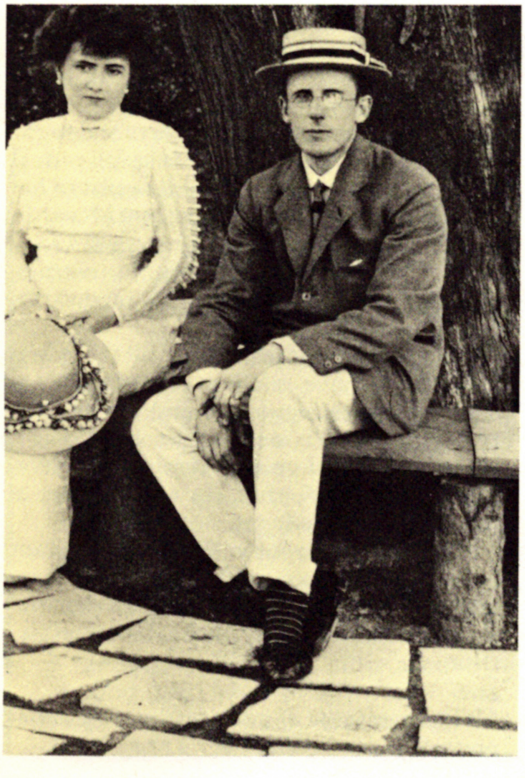
It was to the author H.G. Wells, whom she met at the age of 16, that Joan confessed all about 'the secret part of her life'. He was sympathetic, but advised her to keep it to herself until she was 'strong enough to bear being laughed at by fools'; then, when she was ready, she should write down what she knew – 'It is important that you become a writer,' said Wells.

Joan Grant broke off her first engagement because her fiancé and his family were intolerant of her belief in her dream lives. It was indeed a dream that led her to her next romance.

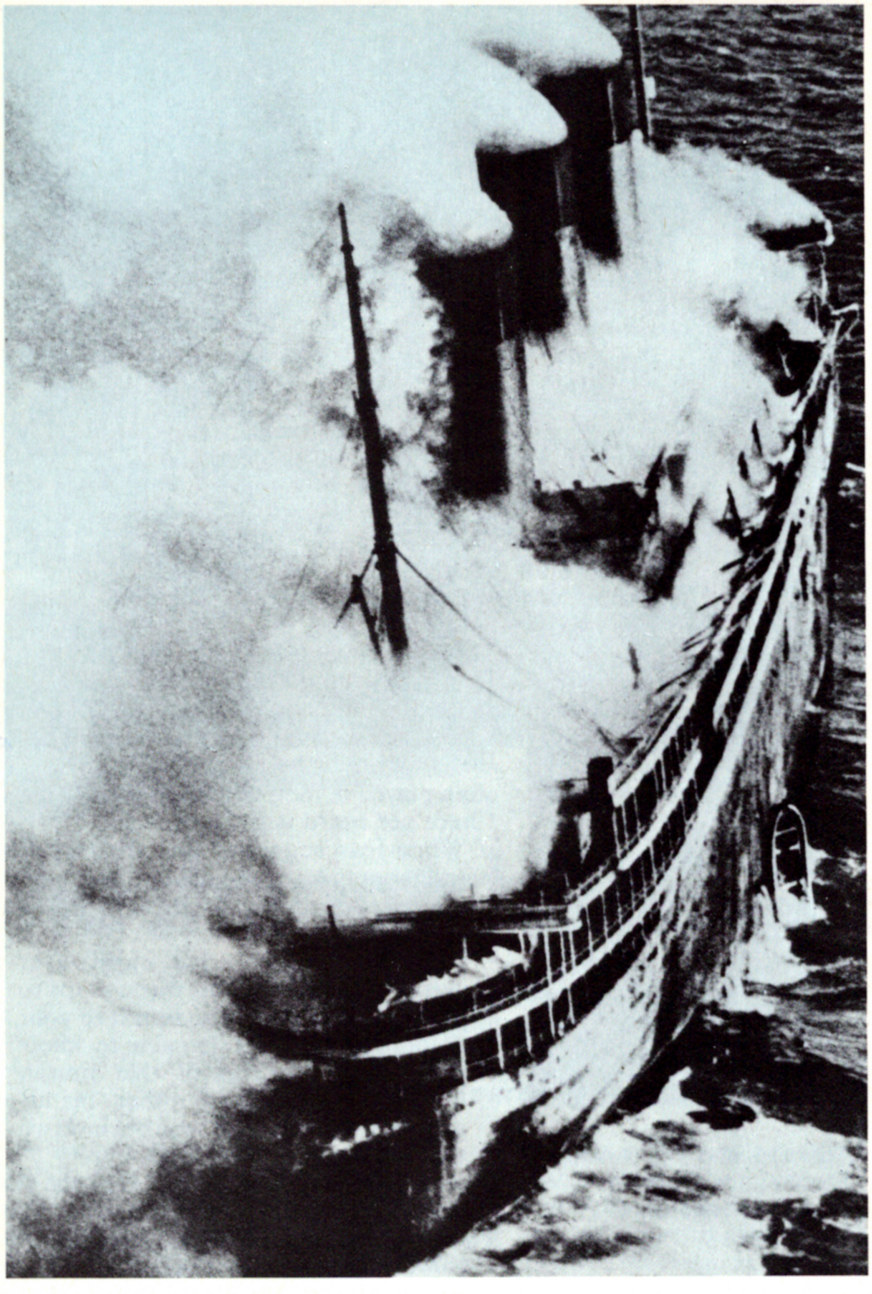
This dream of a man recurred over a period of time, during which she went to Switzerland for a ski-ing holiday. Alone in the hotel music room, she was playing Jennie's music on the piano when the door opened – and she looked into the eyes of the man in her dream. The stranger looked at her intently and then said, 'It really is you. I have dreamed with you for nearly two years':

Top: Seacourt, the childhood home of Joan Grant at Hayling in Hampshire

Above: C.G. Lamb, professor of engineering at Cambridge University, was interested in psychical research and gave a sympathetic ear to Joan Grant's accounts of unusual occurrences. And in one instance he was able to prove from personal knowledge that her experience was paranormal



Left: Blanche and Jack Marshall, parents of Joan Grant. Through her father's wide social contacts, Joan met H.G. Wells. The author advised her to keep her 'secret life' to herself for a while – and then to write about it later



An aerial view of the burning of the French ship *Atlantique* off Guernsey on 4 January 1933. Joan Grant had a precognitive dream about the disaster. In it she was a French sailor caught in a ship fire. She even named the ship as the *Atlantic* and knew it was sailing the Channel

within 24 hours of meeting, Joan and Esmond decided to become engaged.

Esmond had to go to France for six months on business and they planned to marry on his return. He spent the last few days before going abroad at the Marshall home. On the last night, as Esmond was walking to his bedroom, Joan heard a voice – she believes it was her grandmother's – say softly but distinctly: 'After Esmond leaves here tomorrow you will never see him again.'

On the night before he was due to return to England, Esmond died in an accident at a Paris shooting gallery with a gun he thought was not loaded.

Another dream in which a woman told her to 'Go to Leslie' sent Joan to Leslie Grant, whom she married in 1927 at the age of 20. Now she had an ally and a helper in her husband, who willingly undertook the job of writing down her dream experiences from dictation. Joan says she learned how to shift levels of consciousness between sleep and wakefulness so that she did not have to break the thread of events and was able to describe her dreams as she had them. This, she said, helped her to dip more easily into what she called her 'far memory'. Her far-memory dreams transcended space and time.

Another category of her dreams she called 'true dreams'. These depicted incidents that were later found to have occurred at about the time she was dreaming. In one such dream she was a sailor on a burning ship. On waking she told Leslie about it. There was enough detail to say with certainty that the ship was in the Channel, the sailor was French, and the vessel was going to Cherbourg. She thought the ship's name was *Atlantic*. Later that day, newspaper headlines declared '*Atlantique* burns in English Channel: many dead'.

Besides far-memory dreams, Joan Grant soon discovered another way of tuning into the past. At her husband's suggestion, she took up psychometry, and was able to receive vivid impressions of events or people connected with an object just by holding it in her hand for a short time.

A pharaoh's life

In 1936 the psychic was given a scarab and whenever she handled it she recalled events of what appeared to be a previous life in Egypt. In 200 sessions she dictated the story of her existence as Sekeeta, the daughter of a pharaoh and later a priest-pharaoh herself. It amounted to 120,000 words and was published as Sekeeta's 'posthumous autobiography' under the title of *Winged pharaoh*.

What makes Sekeeta's story particularly fascinating is its claim that far memory was known and developed in Egyptian times. Those who received training in it had to remember at least 10 of their own deaths, and their graduation examination required them to be shut in a tomb for four days and nights, during which they underwent seven ordeals.

Sekeeta passed the test and seems to have brought her ability into the 20th century, remembering along the way lives in Greece in the second century BC, in medieval England and 16th-century Italy, and various others in Egypt.

Has Joan Grant really lived all these lives? Do we all have such a continuous past, spanning many centuries and civilisations? Her series of far-memory books and three autobiographical volumes insist that there is much more to life than the existence we are currently experiencing.

What is equally interesting is Joan Grant's claim that our present ills and problems may well have their roots in previous incarnations – and can be cured by far-memory recall of them.

Can a knowledge of previous lives help solve present problems? See page 1774

Post script

Your letters to THE UNEXPLAINED

Dear Sir,
Two years ago my eldest son was due home from another town at 12 noon and my husband was supposed to pick him up at that time at the railway station. The night before I had a dream in which there was a knock on the door shortly after my husband had left home to meet our son. When I opened the door, my son was standing there, smiling at me. I asked him what had happened. He told me that he had unexpectedly left half an hour earlier but there was no way he could let us know – and he hoped his father had not left the house yet.

The following morning I told my husband about the dream and suggested that he go to the station half an hour early. But he did not listen to me and left home at 11.30 a.m. Fifteen minutes after he had gone, my son turned up at the door exactly as I had seen in my dream – he used the exact words and everything. This was surely some sort of premonition?
Yours faithfully,
Smiljana Kovac (Mrs) South Yarra, Australia

Dear Sir,
I take exception to the opinion that 'The only psychic to give a really accurate description of the Ripper was Kent clairvoyant Nella Jones' (*The Unexplained*, issue 67 page 1337). On the contrary, I find that Nella Jones's published forecasts were hopelessly wrong.

The 'accurate' forecast said to have been made by her was published only after the arrest and trial of Sutcliffe. But as far as I know no such information was filed prior to the arrest with any responsible body such as the Society for Psychical Research.

If Nella Jones wishes her claims to be treated seriously, then she should produce every word of her interview and allow an independent examination to take place.

Until then, it should be remembered that she described the Ripper as a clean-shaven man able to dress and pose as a woman. And in July 1979 she said: 'He is going to kill again if he is not caught soon, only I feel that this time it could be a young boy of 15 or 16. . . . I don't think he has ever married, but I believe . . . that his father was a cripple. . . . I have the feeling he was taken away from his mother when he was 10 or 11 years old.'

How wrong can you get?
Yours faithfully,
Melvin Harris Hadleigh, Essex

Dear Sir,
I am taking this opportunity of telling you about a strange experience I had on 5 July 1981. It started at 1.15 a.m. when the closing of the living room door awakened me. I looked over and saw my oldest daughter standing there. I then looked at the luminous clock and, realising the time, I asked her what was wrong. She made no reply. My dog Karl walked over to her and then came back, sitting beside me.

I told my daughter to come to me and she did. Then I realised she had a glow around her, especially around her neck and wrist. I was alarmed and jumped up and, when I did, she withdrew to the door. I walked towards her and turned on the light. I almost jumped out of my skin when I realised she was not there at all. I sat up until 4.30 in the morning trying to figure it out. When I asked my daughter about it next day, she did not know what I was talking about.
Yours faithfully,
Walter Reid Leeds

Dear Sir,
I used to live on the twelfth floor of some flats in Paddington, facing west. A week before the sky lab fell, my wife and I were on the balcony in the evening, at about 9 p.m., and saw a blue and green ball of light fall from the sky. It seemed to black out just above Fulham. We expected a lot of people to see it at that hour and because it was so big. But there was nothing on the television news that night.

Not long after the sky lab and shooting stars fell (I'm sorry but I can't remember the dates), my wife and I were on the roof during the night watching for shooting stars. We saw what looked like three stars, but they were moving a little slower than shooting stars and had no trail behind them. They also looked too far away to be a shooting star or a plane. One was coming from the east and going west, moving in a straight line. The second came from the west, turned north to pass the third one, and vanished. The third stopped dead, then shot off at tremendous speed towards the west. I am sure they were not stars or planes.

There was nothing about this in the newspapers or on television, but someone must have seen them. I wonder if anyone who saw these amazing lights would let *The Unexplained* know about it.
Yours faithfully,
R.J. O'Connell London

Dear Sir,
Photographic evidence can be most useful in the study of UFOs and the Loch Ness monster, but it is important that the photographs be of good quality. Black and white silverless films are soon to be available. These give a virtually grainless, high-resolution image ideal for photographing UFOs and the like. Perhaps readers of *The Unexplained* will take note of this and use the new film to get better pictures of phenomena. It would also be a good idea for people who work in out-of-the-way locations (oil rigs, forests, remote country areas) to be specially vigilant about spotting UFOs and taking the best possible pictures of them.

It is important to stress that the use of a standard lens on the camera – approximately 25 millimetres focal length for a 110 camera, 50 millimetres for a 35-millimetre camera and 80 millimetres for a $2\frac{1}{4}$-inch camera – will give a photograph from which the most useful information can be gained (general seeing conditions, Sun's position, comparison with foreground objects, for example).

Congratulations on producing a very readable magazine.
Yours faithfully,
M.G. Savage Leyland, Lancs.

Send *your* letters to THE UNEXPLAINED, Orbis House, 20–22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT

THE WORLD'S MYSTERIOUS PLACES – 35
Woodhenge, Wiltshire, England